

Press statement

Comrade Bala Tampoe (1922-2014)

Wednesday 3 September 2014, by [CIWU](#), [JAYATILAKE Linus](#) (Date first published: 2 September 2014).

The passing away of a veteran Trade Union leader at the age of 92 years, is still a big shock to the working-people of Sri Lanka. His absence will be very much felt at the level of the big meetings of the National Labour Advisory Council. It is for the first time the members of the CMU (Ceylon Mercantile & General Workers' Union) are left with an experience of a loss of a leader.

His method of leadership, his issue-based Trade Union and political education and the Executive Committee meetings on Wednesdays are hallmarks of his active dedicated life.

He is really a model Working-Class leader who dedicated his whole life to one and only cause of the Labour Movement. His versatile knowledge and vast experience from being a teacher of Botany in the School of Agriculture at Peradeniya to being a reputed criminal lawyer, have added more feathers to his mission as a militant leader of the Working-Class.

His Marxist and the left learnings from the best traditions of the LSSP, have led him to remain steadfast in the independence of the working-class against all forms of class-collaborationist politics. His defense of the youth of the 71 Uprising is a historical fact which the student and the Youth movement in the country should emulate.

The last few years of his life, he was harping especially at the NLAC to get the Workers Charter implemented. The NLAC Worker Group together with the other Unions should join hands to force the Government to get the ILO Conventions 87 & 98 legislated in the country.

Comrade Bala leaves the CMU and the working-class at a moment of the emerging crisis of the Neo-liberal capitalist system on a world scale. But the rich memories of his militancy and the class intransigence will be his sole contribution to the Working-Class, to confront the collapse of this system.

May the rich and wonderful memories and traditions of Bala remain with us in the Movement.

Linus Jayatilake
President.
United Federation of Labour
Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union

August 2, 2014

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